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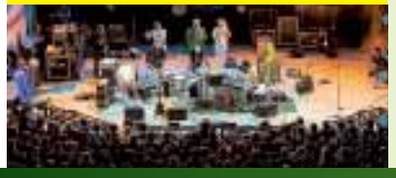
ARRIVEDERCI, LOLA
FABULOUS (FREE) ARTS FEST WINDS UP TONIGHT {page 9}



SHELVED
CROSBY TO MISS TWO GAMES AS A 'PRECAUTION' {page 20}

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$30
How much the proposed 1% economic development tax would add

$54
Municipal property tax: Increase in the proposed 2012 budget

$57
Approved increase in wastewater and water rates

$141
More per year for the average Londoner

London CANADA

KATIE NAUS/FOR METRO

Adding up the city service bill

If 2012 budget is approved, homeowners could be on the hook for an extra $141 next year Budget vote is in February

ANGELA MULLINS
@METRONEWS.CA

There's a lot of numbers flying around city hall these days. But what do all those pluses, minuses, per cents and levies you keep hearing about mean? Here's a rough breakdown of the draft $478-million tax-support budget for 2012:

• Right now, the average homeowner pays $2,351 in property taxes, $318 for water and $460 a year for wastewater services: A total of $3,129 a year.

• The 2012 draft budget includes a 2.3 per cent property-tax hike, bringing the total to $2,405 a year. The proposed increase could change by the time council votes on the budget in February.

• Council has already approved raising water and wastewater rates next year. That will bring the cost to $343 a year for water and $492 a year for sewers.

• If you add up the sewer, water and proposed property-tax increase, the average homeowner would pay $3,240 next year: $111 more than what they're shelling out now.

• Any other tax or rate increase would come on top of that. So if councillors decide to go with a one per cent tax for development projects, homeowners would be on the line for about $30 more a year. Add that to the other increases and the total is $3,270 a year for the average ratepayer — $141 more than what they're paying today.

Law of averages

A home with an assessed value of $194,000 is considered "average" in London, city officials say.

▶ The graphic to the left shows the breakdown of how fees and proposed tax hikes could affect the average London homeowner.

Developing interest

Councillors have thrown a proposed tax to pay for development projects back to administrators, asking that they find other ways to finance the work. City manager Jeff Fielding tossed out four ideas, but noted that all "have some strings attached":

• Asking London Hydro to repay a loan, which would bring in about $70 million;

• Realigning the capital budget and working in some of the proposed projects, which would total about $700 million;

• Working out a deal that would net an increased dividend from London Hydro;

• Borrowing the money.

ANGELA MULLINS

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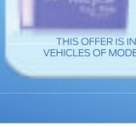

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Anti-abuse training 'shows leadership'

More Thames Valley District School Board coaches have received certified training to protect student athletes from abuse than any other school board in Canada, says a spokesperson for the training program.

More than 1,000 Thames Valley staff, volunteers and administrators have completed the Respect in Sport program created by former NHL-er Sheldon Kennedy, who raised public awareness when he came forward as a victim of abuse by a coach.

"TVDSB has shown great leadership," says program spokesperson Holly Abraham. "Several school boards are using our programs, but TVDSB was the first in Ontario and the largest school-board implementation in the country." METRO

Rippers release schedule

The London Rippers have posted their 2012 schedule on Facebook.

The team opens the Frontier League season on the road May 18. Their first game at Labatt Park is scheduled for May 25 against the Sauget, Ill.-based Gateway Grizzlies. The team's last regular-season game will be Sept. 2 in Traverse City, Mich. Times listed on the schedule are subject to change. METRO

Crafty students topple KD donations record

Friendly competition among students and staff helped more than double donations ◐ Mac-and-cheese challenge marks second year at local school

ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

▶ Jessica Brouwer, 16, a Grade 11 student at London District Christian Secondary School, centre, cheers as teacher Margaret Dijkhuis watches yesterday as thousands of Kraft Dinner boxes topple like dominoes in the school gym.

ANGELA MULLINS
@METRONEWS.CA

What do you get when you mix hundreds of teenagers with thousands of boxes of Kraft dinner?

The answer should be obvious — an awesome chance to have a little fun with food.

At least that was the case yesterday at London District Christian Secondary School, where students turned more than 4,500 boxes of mac and cheese into dominoes and cheered as they toppled.

The setup took more than two hours as students measured, tested and watched their work tip prematurely more than once.

Austin Stelpstra, a 14-year-old Grade 9 student, was among the most studious helpers, focusing intently on spacing for the pattern that ran down a balance beam from the gym's stage and covered the floor. The design stood several feet high in some places and swirled into complex circles elsewhere.

"I've always just loved dominoes," Stelpstra, said noting that each box needs to be four to six inches from the next. "We went over things a few times, but I have a feeling there may one or two places (where the chain reaction may stop)."

He was right. Minus a few hiccups, the boxes toppled according to plan.

The food was donated as part of an annual Youth For Christ fundraiser. Dubbed S.C.R.O.O.G.E. — Students' Christmas Rush for Oodles and Oodles of Goodies Etc. — 12 local schools are participating this year. Friendly competition among students and staff helped more than double donations from last year.

All donations will benefit the Salvation Army food bank.

4,779
Number of boxes of macaroni and cheese donated by students and staff at London District Christian Secondary School.

1 news

Ontario consumers pay too much for electricity because the Liberal government isn't doing enough to promote conservation, the opposition parties charge.
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On the web at metronews.ca

Indonesian police give the force's lip-synching cop the axe. Video at metronews.ca/video

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Jacket. Donation

▶ Firefighter Shawn Hannon sorts through a pile of donated coats yesterday morning at the fire hall on Western Road. The fire department, Catholic Central High School and the Catholic Education Centre have teamed up to collect jackets for people in need. Donations can be made at any fire station or at the high school. More than 16,000 coats have been donated since the effort began 12 years ago.

ANGELA MULLINS/METRO

Preparing the holiday coating

Anti-bully bill gets Catholic board support

Some religious leaders said the bill was an affront to traditional family values Education Minister Laurel Broten rejected the criticisms as 'homophobic'

Despite opposition from some religious groups, the London District Catholic School Board says it supports Premier Dalton McGuinty's anti-bullying legislation.

Christian, Jewish and Muslim representatives said they agreed school bullies must be stopped, but they don't condone a requirement under the legislation proposed to promote sexual tolerance through gay clubs in schools.

A spokesman with the London District Catholic School Board told AM980 the board embraces the proposed changes within the Catholic culture.

"We deal with those situations within our own faith and within our own views, and make sure those people are protected and make sure that we're tolerant of everyone in our system," said board chair Phil Squire.

Other religious activists say there will be a mass exodus of kids from public and separate schools if the anti-bullying bill with its sexual accommodation provisions is not amended.

"There's radical, radical stuff in there, all of this agenda on gender identity and facilitating the questioning of a child's gender and all this other sex-driven stuff that's clearly coming from activists," said Jack Fonseca of Campaign Life Catholic.

AM980/AM980.CA

Minority Liberals survive first confidence vote

The governing Liberals survived their first confidence test in the legislature yesterday as a crucial vote on their throne speech passed 69 to 37.

The Progressive Conservatives voted against the Nov. 22 speech, while the Liberals and the NDP supported it.

If the throne speech didn't pass, it would have triggered the defeat of the government and likely another election.

Premier Dalton McGuinty said he's glad his two-month-old minority government survived.

"I like to think that we're all seized with a sense of responsibility," he said.

NDP Leader Andrea Horwath played down her party's role in propping up the government, acknowledging that she had "concerns" about the priorities laid out in the speech.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

▶ NDP Leader Andrea Horwath

"But there was one particular piece of that throne speech that gave us a glimmer of hope, and that was the government making a commitment to work with the other parties to get some things done," she said.

"We haven't seen much of the working-together part yet."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Opposition

- The Opposition Tories tried to amend the speech with a legislated wage freeze for public-sector workers, but their motion was defeated by a vote of 69 to 37.
- Tory Leader Tim Hudak said he's "disappointed" that the Liberals and NDP teamed up to oppose the idea, which would have saved the cash-strapped government a lot of money.
- All three parties have indicated that they'd be reluctant to trigger another election so soon after the Oct. 6 vote, which reduced the Liberals to just one seat short of a majority government in the 107-member legislature.
- The next confidence test for the minority Liberals will likely come when it tables its budget next spring.

Charity halfway to goal

The Children's Health Foundation has announced that Crosby's Challenge for Children's has surpassed the halfway point of its goal. Crosby's Challenge has 12 monitors to go toward its goal of raising money for 25 new life-saving monitors for the neonatal intensive-care unit.

METRO

Lightning swap guards

The London Lightning have traded guard Nick Lother and a first-round pick in the 2012-13 National Basketball League of Canada draft to the Moncton Miracles for guard Tristan Martin. London returns to action Saturday at 7 p.m. at the JLC against the Oshawa Power.

METRO

Watch for fraudsters: Police

The Children's Health Foundation says its not affiliated with anyone going door-to-door selling tickets for a draw. Police said people have been selling tickets door-to-door for a "Christmas draw benefiting Children's Health Foundation." All legitimate initiatives can be found at childhealth.ca. **METRO**

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James pleads guilty to sex abuse

Former junior hockey coach to be sentenced on Feb. 22 Ex-player Fleury says damage has been done

LARRY MACDOUGAL/THE CANADIAN PRESS

It was another dark moment in one of the blackest chapters in Canadian hockey.

Former junior coach and convicted sex offender Graham James pleaded guilty yesterday to sexual assaults involving two of his former players, including NHL star Theoren Fleury. A soft-spoken, emotionless James entered the plea in a Winnipeg courtroom via video link from Montreal.

The disgraced coach was originally facing nine charges of sexual assault involving three players between 1979 and 1994, but only pleaded guilty to charges involving Fleury and another victim, whose name remains under a court-order publication ban.

Charges related to a third complainant, Greg Gilhooly, were stayed.

At a news conference in Calgary, Fleury criticized the justice system for how it handled the James case.

"I believe what people show me — he showed me he was and is a rapist. There is no changing a monster like that."
THEOREN FLEURY, EX-NHL STAR

"Graham James pled guilty years ago, and then he was granted a pardon after he was found in Mexico and brought back to Canada on these charges," he said. "He was given bail.... This is what the mighty Canadian justice system allowed a previously convicted child rapist to do." **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

BILL BECKER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Graham James holds his award in Toronto on June 8, 1989, after being named The Hockey News man of the year.

Perimeter pact initiatives still years away

Key features of the Canada-U.S. perimeter-security pact — including a controversial new entry-exit system for crossing the 49th parallel — are three to four years from seeing the light of day.

The 29-point deal and an accord on regulatory reform aim to streamline trade while protecting the continent from terrorist attacks and other security threats by aligning approaches and screening more people and cargo before they arrive in North America.

"These agreements create a new, modern border for a new century," Prime Minister Stephen Harper said at a formal ceremony in Washington, alongside U.S. President Barack Obama.

"The key that locks the door to terrorists also opens a wider gate to cross-border trade and travel."

PAUL CHIASSON/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ Prime Minister Stephen Harper and U.S. President Barack Obama hold a news conference following a meeting at the White House in Washington, D.C., yesterday.

But many of the initiatives will be years in the making.

Full implementation of the entry-exit control regime isn't expected until June 2014, the same year a new integrated cargo-screening strategy is expected to be fully online.

An improved means of sniffing for explosives in the luggage of U.S.-bound air travellers isn't due for completion until March 2015. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Contentious

- The most contentious feature could be the plan to exchange entry information of all persons at the Canada-U.S. border, which would serve as a record of exit from the other country.
- Critics of the perimeter-security initiative argue it puts Canadian sovereignty at risk.

FB's popular list is out

An obscure online acronym is among the more surprising topics popular with Canadian Facebook users in 2011.

Facebook's list of the year's most popular status updates was topped by LMS, which is short for "like my status." The acronym was followed by the late Jack Layton, the video game "Call of Duty: Modern Warfare 3," the death of Osama bin Laden and Charlie Sheen. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

M. SPENCER GREEN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Blagojevich

Ex-governor sentenced to 14 years in jail

Rod Blagojevich, the ousted Illinois governor whose three-year battle against criminal charges became a spectacle, was sentenced to 14 years in prison yesterday, a stiff penalty for the man convicted of trying to sell President Barack Obama's vacated Senate seat to raise campaign cash or land a high-paying job.

Judge James Zagel gave Blagojevich some credit for taking responsibility for his actions — which the former governor did in an address to the court earlier in the day — but said that didn't mitigate his crimes. Zagel also said Blagojevich did some good things for people as governor, but was more concerned about using his powers for himself.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Solar cheaper than we think: Research

Queen's prof estimates that the clean energy can be had on the global market for less than $1 per watt

A Queen's University professor says the public is being kept in the dark about the viability of solar energy.

Joshua Pearce of the Kingston, Ont., university's department of mechanical and materials engineering says many analysts project a higher cost for solar energy.

But Pearce says they aren't considering recent technological advancements and price reductions.

Pearce says he believes solar systems are near the "tipping point" where they can produce energy for about the same price of other traditional sources of energy.

Pearce makes the comments in releasing a study co-written by students published in the December edition of Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews.

Pearce has created a calculator program available for download online that can be used to determine the true costs of solar energy.

Analysts look at many variables to determine the cost of solar systems for consumers, including installation and maintenance costs, finance charges, the system's life expectancy and the amount of electricity it generates.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market moment

PRICES AS OF 5 P.M. YESTERDAY

TSX	Dollar
+ 67.48 (12,148.73)	- 0.07¢ ($0.98¢ US)
Oil	**Natural gas**
- 79¢ US ($100.49 US)	$3.421 US (- 6.6¢)
	Gold
	$1,734.50 US (+ $13 US)

Apple. Store

▶ Apple employees gather at the entrance to the new Grand Central Terminal store in New York during a media preview yesterday.

MARK LENNIHAN/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

A big Apple in the Big Apple

One of the world's largest Apple stores is opening at the landmark 140-year-old Grand Central Terminal train station in New York City. The 23,000-square-foot outlet will open its doors to the public on Friday.

RIM forced to change BBX name

Research In Motion is being forced to change the name of its new BBX smartphone operating system after the company lost a trademark ruling in the United States.

The name change marks another setback for the Waterloo, Ont.-based tech company, which has been hyping the new system for months.

A U.S. court ruled that the name BBX has already been trademarked by a software company in New Mexico.

RIM said on its Twitter account that "BlackBerry 10" will be the official name of the next-generation platform that will power future BlackBerry smartphones.

RIM is expected to release a new generation of BlackBerrys early in 2012 that run on the new operating system.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Fairview Mall
Fairview Park Mall
Georgian Mall
Heritage Place
Hillcrest Mall
Lambton Mall
Lansdowne Place
Lime Ridge Mall
Lynden Park Mall
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Masonville Place
New Sudbury Centre
Northgate Shopping Centre
Oakville Place
Oshawa Centre
Pen Centre
Pickering Town Centre
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HOW TO HOST AN OFFICE CHRISTMAS PARTY

HE SAYS ...

JOHN MAZEROLLE
METRO

As one of Canada's top 605 columnists, I'm often asked advice on how to throw the perfect office Christmas party.

To me, the key has always been to think about fun and merry-making, so that you can avoid those things whenever possible.

You don't want to get sued, do you?

As most holiday partygoers know, parties have changed over the years from alcohol-fuelled blowouts where you might see Barb the secretary drink Kahlua from a shoe, to glorified potlucks where the wildest thing is the Worst Christmas Sweater contest.

Nowadays everyone seems scared, rightly or not, that they'll get sued if a partygoer drinks too much and goes all Darwin Awards on them. We, as hosts, fear our own guests' stupidity. (Eventually a drunk driver will sue the descendants of Sir Isaac Newton, whose famous forebear was reckless enough to have discovered the laws of motion, which have caused us all so much harm.)

My usual advice for the Christmas-party problem is to take extra precautions: serve alcohol, but only responsibly; get everyone to sign waivers (make sure the pencils aren't too sharp!); and place written warnings throughout the party explaining the possible danger represented by each item, including co-workers.

But this year I'm advocating something different, mostly because I want to see how it works out. This year, you should throw a party so wild that everyone will either forget what happened or be too embarrassed to bring it up, let alone sue.

John's unethical office-party tips:

• Start by picking a party theme. Tequila or Rum are two good ideas to get you started.

• Don't be concerned with unnecessary party frivolities, such as food.

• Spike everything, including the non-alcoholic beer. It's Christmas.

• As guests arrive, tell them it's a "social mixer" and seat them in unusual pairings — for example, your co-worker's husband with the blond intern, or Ms. Phillips in finance with the mail boy. Playfully point out the mistletoe over each spot.

• Provide a gift bag that includes a game of Twister, several lampshades and a pair of Santa-themed underpants.

• For the coup de disgrace, supply everyone with disposable cameras.

• As people are stumbling out the door, provide them with "door prizes" containing a perfume- or cologne-stained handkerchief, a napkin with a phone number on it and a strand of blond hair.

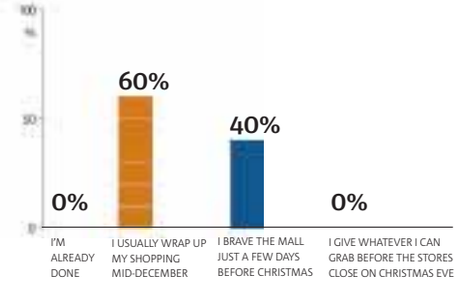
If all goes well (how could it not?), everyone will have the time of their life and never speak of it again.

Oh, and if something horrible and/or tragic happens because of my idea, then remember your legal recourse. Sue Isaac Newton.

Read more of John Mazerolle's columns at metronews.ca/hesays

Panel **Register at metropolitanpanel.ca and take the quick poll**

How early do you finish Christmas shopping?



Local tweets

- **@craig hunter_:** PDA at the bus stop? Not cute. #ldnont
- **@AshleyVerhaaff:** Last night #WOTCH staff & participants served 133 holiday meals to children at the @BGCLondon! Can't wait to help again on Thursday! #ldnont
- **@asharrard17:** Happy Wednesday! #LdnOnt
- **@AlexaReigh:** Guy in tshirt on campus. Not thAt warm bud.#wtf #uwo
- **@stephaniefusco:** What I'm not doing today: visiting the #SigmaChi frat house at #UWO to celebrate my brother's 21st. To my parents....good luck.
- **@Kraymr:** Slept for 5 hours feels like 12 why can't this happen every day . #xmas-comefaster #examssucks #uwo
- **@kerrymckee50:** Demand for help this Christmas HUGE in London. Organizations hope people are generous. #ldnont
- **@jenptin:** It's hard to believe last year this time #LdnOnt had its Snowmageddon but this year there's no snow yet #GlobalWarming

Birthday treats for polar bear

KINGUSSIE, SCOTLAND. Is Walker the polar bear planning The Great Escape? Probably not, as he seems quite content after celebrating his third birthday at Highland Wildlife Park in the Scottish Highlands. After playing with his new toy — a workman's hard hat — he ate an ice birthday cake, full of fish, fruit and vegetables.

METRO WORLD NEWS

370 kilograms is Walker's current weight. He is small now; the average polar bear can weigh over 600 kilograms.

He still waits for a special one

MATING. Walker may have to play with that hard hat a little longer after his date with a mate has been delayed. Zookeepers had brought in a potential female mate but she turned out to be already pregnant. Walker once had a female companion, but she had to be put down in April due to ill health. METRO WORLD NEWS

"Young bears are very inquisitive, especially Walker."

UNA RICHARDSON, ZOOKEEPER AT HIGHLAND WILDLIFE PARK

GETTY IMAGES

Daily Zoom

Anybody seen my baby?

metro

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HANDOUT

▶ LOLA is being hosted at Museum London and is free to the public.

Celebrating our creativity

LOLA prepares to host its final event **Over the years, big names have graced their stages**

BACKSTAGE PASS

AMANDA GRANT
METRO LONDON

The London Outdoor Live Arts festival will take over Museum London one last time tonight. As the festival's artistic director Paul Walde prepares to leave town for Victoria, B.C., friends, LOLA volunteers and London's creative community will gather to say thank you to the festival and to Walde.

"I think people want to come out just to say thanks for LOLA and thanks to Paul, and just reminisce over what has been accomplished in the last five years," says Ian Doig-Phaneuf, music curator for the festival. "I hope people want to come to just say hi and celebrate the end of LOLA together."

Starting in 2006, LOLA brought major musicians and artists to the city, showcasing their work in a free outdoor festival and a year-round concert series at Museum London. Every September artwork would be installed throughout the downtown core while musicians performed to massive crowds in Victoria Park.

Caribou, Grizzly Bear, Rhys Chatham, Yoko Ono and Jamie Lidell have all showed work, or performed, at LOLA.

Tonight's celebration at Museum London is a nod to the partnership the festival had with the gallery and with Walde.

The evening will start early with a presentation by Vancouver artist Rebecca Belmore, whose billboard installation has taken over the corner of Ridout and York streets.

Music begins at 7 p.m. with a performance by Doig-Phaneuf's psychedelic jazz rock ensemble Cladda.

"We like to work with space and dynamic," Doig-Phaneuf says. "It's mainly improvised. We have specific themes we know work really well and so we'll present those throughout the set. (Bandmates) Jeremy Ive and Pat Chill are amazing listeners. If I play three notes, they know where I'm going to go immediately — it's pretty special."

Cladda's performance will be followed by Solvent, an electro pop musician based in Toronto.

"He uses all analog synthesizers and drum machines," Doig-Phaneuf says. "He doesn't perform very much, and when he does it is usually in Europe. So it's special that he's going to come to London for this."

For LOLA's final event, Doig-Phaneuf thinks Cladda and Solvent are a perfect pairing.

"LOLA has this balance of complete freedom of expression musically so ending with electro pop and improvised jazz … it's an amalgamation of what LOLA has been since 2006 on a smaller scale."

The event is free and hosted by LOLA founder Andrew Francis. Doors open at 6 p.m.

No sleep until Cleveland

Beastie Boys, Guns N' Roses and Chili Peppers are among the 2012 Rock Hall of Fame class

Welcome to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, Guns N' Roses.

The seminal rock band of the late 1980s and early '90s, best known for hits like Welcome to the Jungle, Sweet Child O' Mine and November Rain, leads the 2012 class of inductees announced on Wednesday. Also making the cut is the hip-hop trio Beastie Boys; rockers the Red Hot Chili Peppers; the late singer/songwriter Laura Nyro; Donovan; and influential British rock group The Small Faces/The Faces, which included Rod Stewart and Rolling Stones guitarist Ronnie Wood.

Nyro, who wrote such hits the 5th Dimension's Wedding Bell Blues and Blood Sweat & Tears' When I Die, is the only female act to make it this time around. The hall passed on Donna Summer, Joan Jett and the Blackhearts, Heart and Rufus with Chaka Khan, who were on the ballot for 2012.

But it wasn't just women who were denied entry into the rock hall for next year. Voters also passed on hip-hop pioneers Eric B. & Rakim, War, the Cure and the Spinners.

Guns N' Roses blazed on the rock scene in 1987 with their official debut, Appetite for Destruction. Fronted by siren-voiced singer Axl Rose, with Slash and Izzy Stradlin on guitars, Duff McKagan on bass and Steven Adler on drums, the group dominated music with its aggressive rock grooves. Early in their career they were criticized for lyrics in the song One in a Million deemed as homophobic.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

2 scene

Parade

Rocker Bret Michaels and Grammy-winning singer Cyndi Lauper are among the celebrities heading to New Orleans for Carnival 2012. Orpheus parade organizers named the pair as their celebrity monarchs yesterday.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Cannonball misfires for "Myth-Busters" TV show, rips through California house and minivan

Sex and sensibility

Two Broke Girls has a sweet core surrounded by stereotypes and sex jokes

Two Broke Girls co-creator Michael Patrick King says he has no plans to alter his hit sitcom to placate critics who say it perpetuates racial stereotypes.

"I'm not going to change. No, absolutely not," King said in a recent interview from his Hollywood office. "I believe that anybody, when you see them for the first time, you judge them based on the surface."

Two Broke Girls — starring Kat Dennings and Beth Behrs as down-on-their-luck waitresses trying to make an extra buck — has become one of the fall TV season's few breakout hits.

The CBS show has an old-school feel and a big heart — at its core is the odd-couple friendship between street-smart Max (Dennings) and high-strung heiress-turned-pauper Caroline (Behrs).

"When we started out our joke was that we were going to sell it as Laverne & Shirley on crack," says King, an executive producer on Sex and the City.

"I felt that there was something missing (from TV), which was an old-fashioned sitcom for a young sensibility. And so I decided that it would be really fun to try to do two really funny girls, because I LOVE funny women."

While the comic chemistry between Dennings and Behrs has received consistent kudos, some critics have taken issue with the show's supporting players, including Oleg (Jonathan Kite) a lascivious Russian fry cook, bumbling Korean diner owner Han (Matthew Moy), and Earl (Garrett Morris), the restaurant's "jive-talking" African-American host.

King seems at a loss to explain why there's been so much chatter about those characters: "It's current, it's something to talk about. It's maybe a little in your face, I don't know," he says.

He notes that archetypes are commonplace in writing and says the show is reflective of his experience in the Big Apple. "Anyone who's ever lived in New York has walked through an enormous melting pot of people. So for me, to do a show where you're not exploring race would be absurd in Brooklyn, N.Y.," he says, adding that the supporting characters will become more fleshed out as 2 Broke Girls progresses.

While 2 Broke Girls has an undeniable sweetness at its core, some critics have also taken umbrage with the crude sex jokes peppered throughout each 30-minute episode. King says such vulgarity is simply a reflection of reality.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Watch it

- A new episode of 2 Broke Girls is set to air Dec. 12, followed by a repeat episode. Air times are: 8 p.m. ET (OMNI2); 7 p.m. PT on Citytv, 8 p.m. MT on Citytv, 6 p.m. CT on Citytv.

PHOTOS: THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ In Two Broke Girls, two down-on-their-luck waitresses are struggling to make an extra buck.

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Hot new show eyes cool climate

Frozen Planet takes a look at Earth's polar regions
How climate change is impacting these ecosystems

Discovery Channel's documentary series Frozen Planet will premiere March 18, and will encompass seven episodes including a program on climate change hosted by David Attenborough.

On that seventh episode, the famed British naturalist will investigate what rising temperatures will mean for the planet and life on it.

The network made the announcement Tuesday.

Frozen Planet is described as "the ultimate portrait of our Earth's polar regions." A co-production of Discovery Channel and BBC, it was four years in the making and comes from the team behind Planet Earth, the acclaimed series that aired on Discovery in 2007.

The Frozen Planet team filmed in every nation inside the Arctic and Antarctic Circles during 2,356 days in the field, 1 1/2 years at sea, more than six months on the sea ice and 134 hours beneath that ice, according to Discovery.

Among the sights: the birth of an iceberg bigger than the largest building on Earth, a caterpillar with antifreeze in its veins and tiny baby polar bears, which at birth are 25 per cent smaller than human babies.

Frozen Planet will be narrated by Alec Baldwin.

Discovery and TLC networks head Eileen O'Neill calls the series remarkable "because it's so surprising. You see sequences that have never been captured on film before — a world you would expect to see in a Narnia film, not on this planet.

"You see an environment that's changing, if not disappearing, in our generation."

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DISCOVERY CHANNEL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Polar Bears are one of many arctic animals threatened by climate change.

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Big night, less than great expectations

The cast of New Year's Eve shares their lacklustre memories of evenings filled with Auld Lang Syne

RICHARD CROUSE
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

The cast of the new Garry Marshall film, New Year's Eve, had a great time making the movie, but haven't always had the best time on December 31st.

Josh Duhamel says the key to enjoying the night is keeping "expectations low" and leaving by 10:30 p.m.

Hector Elonzo, who has appeared in all 17 of Marshall's films, agrees.

"Expectations low, definitely," he says. "I did have one lousy New Years, because I expected something from it." He tells a story about being a musician "in the days of rocks and caves, before they knew the world was round."

His jazz quartet scored a show — "New Year's Eve was the big gig," he says, "that's when you made $50!" — to discover the audience didn't go for their New York brand of cool jazz. "They were like an oil painting looking at us. That was a big let down for us"

"When I stopped wanting my New Year's Eve to be perfect is when it started working out right," chimes in Hillary Swank, who plays the producer of the Times Square New Year's Eve show in the all-star film. "When I was young I was always looking for the best party to ring in the New Year, and I always ended up in a car saying, (sadly) 'Happy New Year.'"

"I got to kiss the girl I really liked, and then she turned around and kissed seven other people," says director Garry Marshall. "Not a good night."

But not all his end of the year experiences have been bad. In the early '60s he met his wife Barbara at a New Year's Eve party, and the two are still married. In fact she has a cameo in the movie playing a nurse.

Abigail Breslin may have an Oscar nomination under her belt, but that doesn't mean she can do whatever she wants on New Years.

"My parents are cool," says the 15-year-old actress, "they let me do things." But would they let her behave like her on-screen character and go to the biggest New Year's party on earth?

"I was saying the other day in an interview, 'I'm not really sure my mom would let me do New Year's Eve in Times Square.'

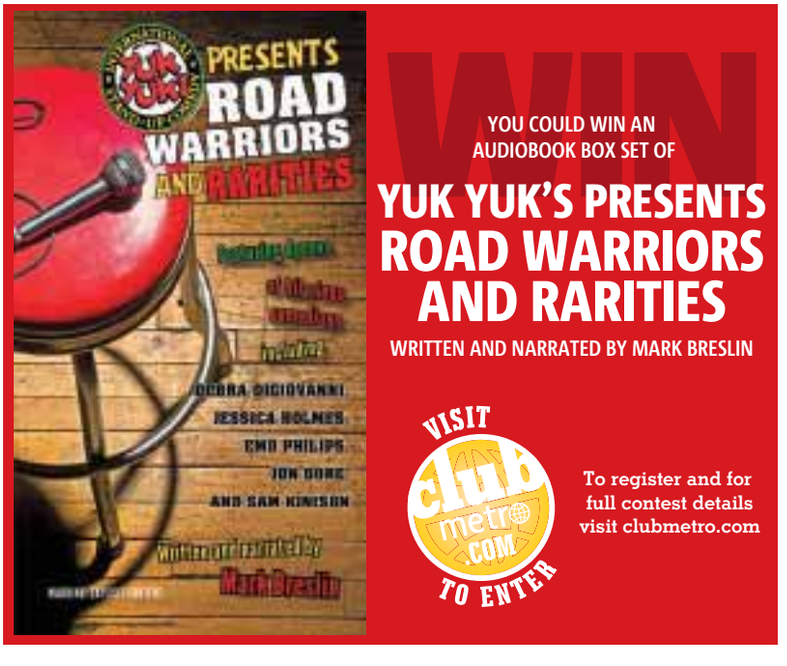
And she was like, 'You're right. I wouldn't.' So I don't think that's going to be happening any time soon."

HANDOUT

▶ New Year's Eve star Abigail Breslin admits in real life her mom would never let her venture out on her own to Times Square on Dec. 31.

HANDOUT

▶ Josh Duhamel says low expectations are the key to a good New Year's eve.



Today in awkward divorce stories

Moore, J.Lo have unpleasant encounters with thier exes

ALL PHOTOS BY GETTY IMAGES

Demi Moore

THE WORD

DOROTHY ROBINSON
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

All of those A-list celebs going through divorces? Things are getting awwwkward!

First up in cringe-worthy separation stories: While Demi Moore was having dinner with a friend at a private club in West Hollywood recently, she couldn't help noticing soon-to-be ex-husband Ashton Kutcher dining nearby.

"She approached his table," a sources tells Us Weekly. "He gave her a hug, and they spoke for a few minutes." The source describes the couple's chat as "polite" but "very awkward."

At least it wasn't as bad as what went down recently with Jennifer Lopez and her soon-to-be-ex-husband Marc Anthony.

Anthony apparently refused to shoot his Latin reality TV show Q'Viva with Lopez because of her new relationship with 24-year-old backup dancer Casper Smart.

A source told Star magazine: "Marc and J.Lo had a tense conference call when she was in Morocco. Inevitably, their discussion boiled down to her new boyfriend (Smart) and Marc made the decision not to work with Jennifer last week as a result."

Call me crazy, but maybe everything can be described as "tense" when you decide to work with someone you are going through a contentious divorce with.

Baldwin doesn't fly the friendly skies

Alec Baldwin

Alec Baldwin claims he was kicked off an American Airlines flight for playing the Scrabble-like game Words with Friends on his phone.

"Flight attendant on American reamed me out (for) playing (Words with Friends) while we sat at the gate, not moving," the actor posted to Twitter.

Baldwin was eventually removed from the plane and forced to take another flight, though his rep laughs off the situation. "He loves Words with Friends so much that he was willing to leave a plane for it," spokesman Matthew Hitzik says.

But some sources say it wasn't as simple as all that. Other passengers claim Baldwin was also talking on the phone, and he reportedly became "violent and aggressive" toward the airline staff, according to Hollyscoop.

Cooper is a Gosling fan too

There was a bit of an uproar when Bradley Cooper was named People magazine's Sexiest Man Alive, with a group of fans insisting Ryan Gosling should've gotten the title. And it turns out Cooper agrees with them.

"We were both in Paris this last week and a friend of mine showed me photographs from the paparazzi. And when I say friend, I mean me, alone in my room, looking at the computer," Cooper says in an interview with Graham Norton.

"And it's like, him walking around, and he literally looks like he's in a photoshoot, like he just came off the runway. There are ones of me, and I literally look like the neighbour who never really comes out of his house."

METRO

Lohan to talk to Ellen

Lindsay Lohan is looking to unveil her Playboy spread on daytime television, as she's chosen Ellen DeGeneres' show for her only magazine-related interview, according to Hollyscoop.

"Lindsay has agreed to do one media interview during the on-sale period of her issue, and has chosen Ellen. Lindsay will not be doing any additional interviews to promote her pictorial," a spokesman for the magazine says.

METRO

Celebrity tweets

@WhitneyCummings
The more tape you use to wrap a present the crazier you are

@kathygriffin
Since I'm nominated 4 a GRAMMY 4 my comedy album "50 & NOT pregnant" don't u think my GRAMMY date should b @JustinBieber??

@eddieizzard
I've now run barefoot for 6 days in a row. Feet are complaining and getting stronger at the same time

@thomaslennon
"she's got legs and knows how to use them" is not that great of a compliment.

Be a fan!
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Gift picks

For the colleague

Thanks to things like Secret Santa, you can often find yourself in a position where you have to buy a gift for someone you don't know all that well. TankBooks's series of literary classics redesigned as iconic cigarette packaging is a good solution because it combines universally appealing reading (Ernest Hemingway, Rudyard Kipling and Leo Tolstoy, for instance) with cool design.
tankmagazine.com

MWN

Indian elegance in tweed and silk at spectacular Chanel show worthy of a Maharaja

Host with the most...style

The garland is hung, the chestnuts are roasting, the turkey's in the oven But what to wear?

One more thing to add to the to-do list for your holiday party: Find an outfit that creates a celebratory mood, is welcoming and warm (but not hot), can hide a little sauce splatter and has pockets to stash remotes, phones and, for the ladies, lip gloss.

It's the delicate balance of being chic and comfortable.

"I can't imagine any more pressure when you're putting on a party — when you are so focused on wine and food — and you have to look beautiful as well," says Simon Kneen, creative director of Banana Republic.

"Men have it a little easier, but you still have to make it look effortless and easy to manage."

Dressing for the role of host is a little bit different from a guest, with many more practical considerations. Just like every other aspect of the party, seasoned, stylish party-throwers say you'll likely want to do as much preplanning as you can.

Even last month, Kneen knew what he'd be wearing next time he entertained: a poplin shirt, sleeves rolled, with a tie. Meanwhile, Manhattan-based designer Shoshanna Gruss will pull one of her many cocktail dresses out of her closet and pair it with a chunky necklace or sparkly cuff bracelet.

"I have some fun statement pieces that I don't get to wear often," she says. "You're setting the rules so you know you'll be appropriate."

It would be a letdown, she adds, for guests who have put thought into their outfits to find the hosts in something they'd wear any other night.

"It feels funny to put on a dress and high heels at home, when you know you're not leaving, but it sets the tone," Gruss says. "Your guests will appreciate it."

Minnie Mortimer says she likes to emerge from her bedroom all dressed up, especially now that she lives in more casual Los Angeles after growing up in New York and Palm Beach, Fla.

This year, Mortimer will jazz up her look with a glittery hair pin. "I really like the holidays to be about a little bit of sparkle. It's hard to do the rest of the time or it looks too much, but during the holidays, it looks appropriate," she says.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

PARK & BOND/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Tyler Thoreson, head of Gilt Groupe's menswear editorial and creative divisions, likes a deep-red, fine-wale pair of cords for men. "It's an injection of holiday without going overboard," he says.

▶ Banana Republic

▶ Shoshanna

▶ Shoshanna

Festive face

- Makeup should be maintenance-free, says Ricky Wilson, Dior Beauty's celebrity makeup artist.
- "You have to keep in mind that you have many people looking at you with little or no time to look at yourself."
- His picks include false eyelashes or at least waterproof mascara, and liquid eyeliner.

Jeanne Space

In this hectic modern world, Twitter has become a cool and succinct way of communicating. It allows me to be accessible, instantly speak my mind, and connects me with all kinds of people. Whether it's a fashion question, or you just want to comment on life's bigger picture, I'd love to hear from you.

@Jeanne_Beker:
If you could wear only 3 pieces of jewelry, what would they be?

- **@WhoIsArlette:** A cocktail ring, chandelier earrings and a brooch
- **@ShamilaJiwa:** A set of harem stacking rings, classic honey comb earrings, and a small diamond talisman. Or a Labradorite Boa. Timeless!
- **@margotaustin:** Easy: wedding band, engagement ring, diamond earrings -- chic, simple and all gifts from my husband. #truelove

▶ @Jeanne_Beker: Working on the future of EDIT, for fashion jewelry yet to come! Stay tuned. Exciting things ahead!

- **@KarleighSergio** My gold heart locket from Birks, my "dream" necklace, and my moms engagement ring that she handed downtome when I turned 16.

TUNE INTO FASHION TELEVISION EVERY SUNDAY AT 5:30 P.M. (ET) ON CTV. JEANNE BEKER'S FINDING MYSELF IN FASHION (PENGUIN) IS AVAILABLE IN BOOKSTORES NATIONWIDE.

She's got hands in a Bundchen of projects

Model Gisele launches third collection for C&A

ANDRE PENNER/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ Clearly she's more than just a pretty face.

Brazilian top model Gisele Bundchen still walks the world's most exclusive catwalks, but she's also showing off her design skills again with a new collection for the Dutch mass retailer C&A.

Bundchen presented her Gisele Bundchen for C&A summer collection last week in Brazil, where she donned some of her creations for photographers.

Forbes magazine ranked Bundchen as a top earner of the fashion industry this year.

Her third collection for the retailer includes cropped blazers, flowery dresses and Panama hats. It will be available only at the Brazilian branches of the chain.

C&A has ventured into collaborations with other celebrities such as pop stars Christina Aguilera and Fergie and Mexican singer Thalia.

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Christmas colognes

The annual fragrance shop-a-thon is upon us Seeing as most men's fragrances last as long as Grandma's Christmas cake, it's one gift worth getting right These nuanced scents should do the trick.

GUERLAIN MOUCHOIR DE MONSIEUR

100 ml , $119, guerlain.com

CZECH & SPEAKE VÉTIVER VERT

To rejuvenate this 'old timer' Czech & Speake have added green woody notes and citrus. **100ml, $118, czechandspeake.com**

NASAMATTO HINDU GRASS

The press release says it's meant to create "a warm affection for humanity." Oddly, you'll find no clues about the ingredients – this goes against the perfumer's concept. But we'd bet on wild grasses and patchouli. **30 ml, $165,averyfineperfumes.com**

CHANEL JERSEY

Jersey takes both its name and inspiration from Coco Chanel's controversial jersey collection of the Twenties. The pairing of jersey with lavender may read like a laundry powder but notes of musk and tonka bean give their latest scent a warm kick. **75 ml, $110, chanel.com**

If you're sixty and you know it...

THE KIT

It's easy to look and feel your best no matter what your age.

Here we compiled some of the best products out there for ladies in their 60s.

Go ahead and enhance your natural beauty!

AFTER HOURS

Bedtime is best for rich skin cream, because its consistency won't interfere with makeup.

L'Oréal Paris Age Perfect Hydra-Nutrition Golden Balm Night for dry skin is enhanced with nourishing oils and has a luscious melting texture. $30, lorealparis.ca

EYE DRAMA

Choose a palette with matte and satin options. Guerlain Écrin 4 Couleurs long-lasting eyeshadows has both, plus soft iridescent and subtle metallic shades for strategic highlighting. $64, guerlain.com

TAKE A BROW

Brows were full at Jill Stuart, Prada and Alexander Wang; they're a must for defining the face. Urban Decay Urban Brow Precision Tip Brow Tint has a super-fine brush tip and the perfect water-resistant shade for blondes. (Shown: Blonde.) $24, urbandecay.com

CRANK THE VOLUME

Boost lifeless locks with Hair: Sally Hershberger Plump Up Thickening Mist for normal to thin hair, $13, hoppersdrugmart.ca

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Get a leg up with some beautiful boots

There's fall and spring, winter and summer — and there's boot season. For many fashion fans, that's the best time of year.

Chances are you've broken out the cowboy boots and jeans, riding boots and leggings and maybe your best black work trousers and those cute high-heel booties you bought last year.

They're all easy, almost no-fail pairings. Finding the right skirt to go with boots, however, is more likely to trip you up, especially this particular season when it seems anything goes with hemlines.

Do long skirts get tall shafts or shorter ones? What's the rule on miniskirts? And can functional weather-friendly boots meet a fashion-forward midiskirt somewhere on the middle of the calf?

"Boots can do it better than almost anything when it comes to pulling your look together, but it also can cut you up," says celebrity stylist Cristina Ehrlich.

She adds: "You have to put your outfit on. If your eye goes straight for the foot, then something isn't right. You want a full 'look'."

Since proportion matters, she suggests every outfit get the mirror test because what works for one skirt might not for the next, even if they're similar styles.

It's all about lines. You don't really want the top of the boot to meet the hemline; it could be longer or shorter — and filled in, when needed, with opaque tights, says Jen Ford, fashion news director at Lucky magazine.

STUART WEITZMAN SPIGA

Ehrlich, a style spokeswoman for Via Spiga, says the most foolproof boot choice is a to-the-knee shaft and a wedge heel, probably in black suede. But, she adds, you'd be surprised how easy it is to incorporate a dark purple, bottle green or grey suede into an existing wardrobe, even one rooted in black.

With a five- or 7.5-centimetre heel, there's really not an outfit you can't wear with these boots. She'd put them on in September and not take them off until April — and that's travelling to different places and climates.

"With the wedge, you get comfort and gain a few inches. You can dress it up or dress it down," Ehrlich explains. "It's chic and cool."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Idea + Ikea = ideal for guests

Karl Lohnes on how a budget guest room can make for a 5-star hotel comfort with a trip to Ikea

DESIGN CENTRE

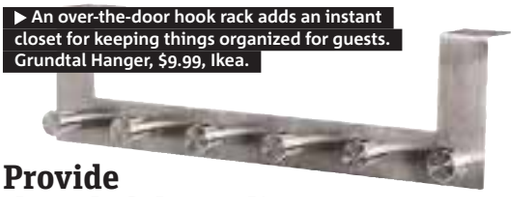
KARL LOHNES
HOME@METRONEWS.CA

It's that time of the year when our spare bedrooms, couches and even our floors welcome guests visiting for the holidays.

Here are a few easy ways to comfortably welcome friends and family without spending all your holiday budget.

Spoil your guests

- **Don't alarm:** Ask your guest about preferred wake up and breakfast times.
- **Small details:** Add a scented candle by the bathtub.



▶ An over-the-door hook rack adds an instant closet for keeping things organized for guests. Grundtal Hanger, $9.99, Ikea.

Provide thoughtful supplies

As a frequent traveller, I find myself always forgetting something behind at home. What a nice surprise to arrive at a friend's place and discover that they've anticipated my forgetfulness.

Installing a guest account on your home computer, extra toiletries, bottles of water, room spray, extra hangers, an alarm clock, a humidifyer and over-the-door hooks for extra hanging storage are all welcomed by guests.

Send them to sleep on a cloud

If you don't have an extra bedroom or pull-out sofa, a quality blow up mattress on the floor can create a comfy nest for your guests.

▶ Sultan Torod Pillow top, starting at $199, Ikea.

The modern mattresses are leak-proof, have electric pumps and some come with foldable, lightweight bases to elevate the mattress off the floor.

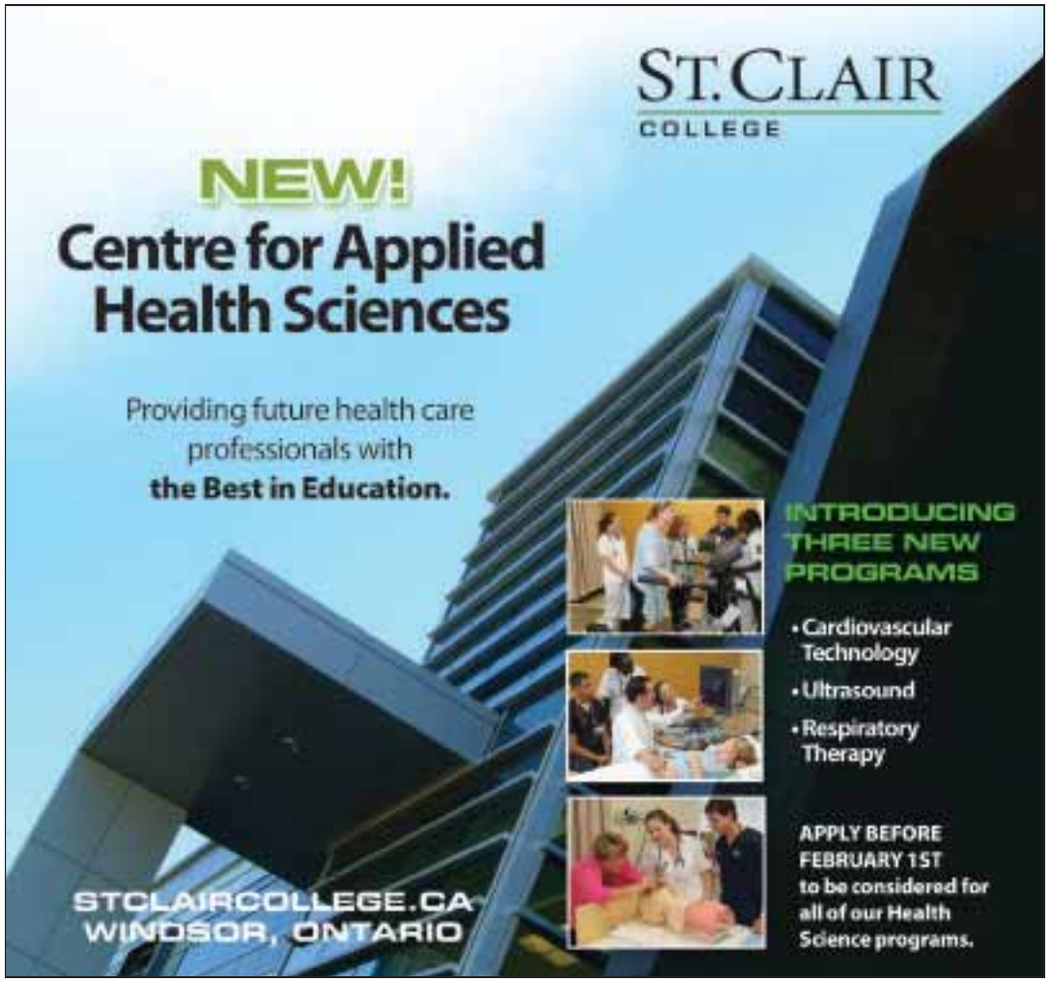
Of course an extra blanket and freshly ironed sheets always create a touch of luxury. My special treat to overnight guests this year is adding extra comfort to a mattress, sofa or air bed with a mattress topper; just a few extra inches of plush comfort will make them feel like they are sleeping in a 5-star hotel!

Offer spa treatment

ALL PHOTOS IKEA

Nansum Basket, $24.99, Ikea

You might only have one bathroom in your place so how do you make it feel as personal for yourself as guests? Try to strip all your personal belongings on display and keep them in a carry caddy in your bedroom. Supply your guests with a similar caddy (filled with toothpaste and shampoo). Decorate your washroom with decorative towels, fresh flowers and candles. You might want to supply extra pyjamas, a bathrobe and slippers for your guests; these are usually the last things to be packed — if at all.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Dear Charles the Butler,
I love to display fresh flowers, but when I receive a bouquet I never know what to do so they last as long as possible.
Any suggestions?

Who doesn't love a fresh bouquet of flowers! Here are some very simple rules to help flowers last longer.

1. Always cut the stems — a clean cut with sharp scissors diagonally will help them "drink" water more efficiently.

2. When in a large vase, always use a maximum of one capful of bleach. This will keep the water clear.

3. My mother swears by adding a small baby aspirin to each vase. Although I have never done this myself I have had other butlers tell me the wonders of this trick.

4. Keep the room temperature as cool as possible. If the flowers are going to be in a very warm area of the house, then try to put them in a cooler room at night. The warmth will expire flowers more quickly than anything.

5. Change the water in the vase at least every other day.

6. Remove any dead flowers as they die, so that the stem does not decay in the water, thus affecting the other flowers in the vase.

HAVE A QUESTION? SEND AN EMAIL TO ASKCHARLESTHEBUTLER@METRONEWS.CA

ISTOCK

▶ Flowers need to befresh. Period.

Weekly Cookbook

Crystal Cook and Sandy Pollock, the casserole Queens, have built their business around revamping the ultimate quick-fix dinners for modern tastes.

In The Casserole Queens Cookbook (Potter, 2011), they share updated recipes for traditional dishes such as chicken potpie, shrimp and grits, stuffed peppers, tuna noodle casserole, ham and cheese skillet casserole, and more. The Queens also provide advice on scaling and freezing casseroles, 16 pages of photos and more.

Cue the crowd-pleasing casserole

This Crab and Rice casserole is creamy, portable and feeds a crowd of 16 a hearty dinner

Crab and Rice Casserole

MATTHEW MEAD/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Delicious often doesn't cut it during the holidays.

Many of us seem to spend the entire month of December on the move, going from one work or family gathering to another. Which means the food you make for these events needs to feed a crowd and be portable, in addition to tasting great. Enter the holiday casserole!

This multilayer dish takes the flavours of a creamy crab dip (that near ubiquitous offering at holiday gatherings) and turns it into a meal. It serves 16 as a hearty dinner, but can feed many more at a potluck, where diners tend to take smaller portions of each dish.

Preparation:

1. Spray a 3 L (13-by-9-inch) baking pan with cooking spray; set aside. In a food processor, pulse together celery, pepper and red onion until finely chopped.
2. In a large skillet heat oil over medium-high; add chopped vegetables, garlic, salt and pepper and sauté 3 to 4 minutes or until softened. Stir in corn and rice; then spoon into bottom of prepared baking pan.
3. Crab Layer: In a bowl, stir cream cheese, mayonnaise, milk and seasoning. Gently stir in crab and chives; spoon over rice mixture.
4. Topping: Return skillet to medium heat and add butter until melted; remove from heat. Add panko, paprika and salt; stir until well mixed. Sprinkle evenly over top of crab mixture. Bake in 200 C (400 F) oven 20 minutes or until bubbly. Let rest 5 mins. before serving.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS/ ADAPTED FOR METRO BY EMILY RICHARDS, PROFESSIONAL HOME ECONOMIST, COOKBOOK AUTHOR AND TV CHEF. FOR MORE VISIT, EMILYRICHARDSCOOKS.CA

Ingredients:

- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium red onion, quartered
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) each salt and black pepper
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) frozen corn kernels, thawed
- 750 ml (3 cups) cooked long-grain white rice

Crab Layer

- 500 g (1 lb) Neufchatel cream cheese, softened
- 250 ml (1 cup) mayonnaise
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) milk
- 10 ml (2 tsp) Old Bay Seasoning
- 1 kg (2 lb) lump crab meat
- 50 ml (1/4 cup) chopped fresh chives or scallions

Topping:

- 45 ml (3 tbsp) butter
- 375 ml (1 1/2 cups) panko breadcrumbs
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) paprika
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) salt

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‘The building phase’

Raptors GM Colangelo preaching patience as he tries to put together a winning team

CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

▶ DeMar DeRozan throws towards a hoop yesterday as Raptors players returned to training in Toronto.

It was a familiar refrain from Bryan Colangelo.

The Toronto Raptors president and general manager said yesterday that he’s feeling good about the NBA team’s building blocks, has a plan in place for the future and that player development remains paramount.

But there was one noticeable tweak to his annual pre-season media availability at Air Canada Centre. Colangelo has a new term to describe his vision for a team that’s coming off a disappointing 22-60 season.

“We’re not talking about rebuilding anymore,” Colangelo said. “I’m stealing a line from coach (Dwane) Casey. What we’re talking about now is building.”

Casey, who was named head coach in June, joined the GM at the availability with new executive vice-president of basketball operations Ed Stefanski.

“It’s going to be about creating a new culture, a new system, implementing that system,” Colangelo said. “And again, maintaining and sticking to the plan. But we’re past rebuilding, we’re now in the building phase.”

What remains unclear is how long the process will take.

The Raptors have a solid young nucleus that includes DeMar DeRozan, Ed Davis and Amir Johnson. They’re expected to see plenty of minutes over the shortened 66-game season.

Lithuanian centre Jonas Valanciunas, the No. 5 overall pick in last June’s draft, is expected to spend the entire season in Europe. The Raptors will likely get another decent selection next spring in what should be a deep draft.

By that time, Colangelo expects to have even more cap flexibility to go with what he hopes will be a strong foundation.

“It really does lend itself to the thought that this plan is in place,” he said. “We shouldn’t alter that plan, we shouldn’t detract from that.”

Fans starved for a sniff of the post-season will likely have to wait at least one more year and probably longer.

17
Toronto plays 17 of its first 26 games on the road.

The Raptors haven’t made the playoffs since bowing out in the first round in 2008.

The club plays its first game Dec. 26 in Cleveland against the Cavaliers before opening their home schedule two days later against the Indiana Pacers.

Training camps and the free agency period are expected to begin Friday, pending a vote on the tentative labour agreement reached last month.

Colangelo said nine of the 10 players he has under contract are available, adding his pressing needs include a third point guard, a small forward and a couple of bigs. Forward Linas Kleiza is still recovering from knee surgery and is expected to be at least a month away from a return.

Colangelo said his players are fit, hungry and ready to give maximum effort on the court.

“You’re going to see a team that is going to fight every night and if they don’t fight, they’re probably not going to be playing,” he said.

Colangelo added he doesn’t want to put a timeline for when the team might contend in the Eastern Conference.

“There are some exciting things to look at as we’re in this process,” Colangelo said. “We constantly are trying to find a way to make this team better.

“That’s what we’ve always done in our careers — all of us. This is about putting together a championship team.”

THE CANADIAN PRESS

MLB buzz still centred around Marlins

Albert Pujols will get a huge contract, there’s no doubt. But the team that will sign the three-time NL MVP remains unclear.

Will it be St. Louis, the team he’s helped to two World Series titles?

The new-look Miami Marlins, whose newfound riches from their new ballpark are dominating the free-agent market?

The Los Angeles Angels, until now in the background?

Miami was the talk of the winter meetings in Dallas yesterday, with teams wondering how close they were to an agreement with Pujols on a deal that could be worth $200 million US or more over 10 years.

$58M
The Miami Marlins plucked another free agent prize yesterday, reaching a deal with four-time all-star pitcher Mark Buehrle for $58 million US over four years.

St. Louis said it made a new offer Tuesday to keep Pujols. Agents said they had heard the Angels were bidding, too. Big spenders such as the New York Yankees and Boston Red Sox were reduced to spectators.

“They have a new stadium. They’re excited about it, and it’s good for baseball,” Yankees manager Joe Girardi said of the Marlins. “Our roster is pretty set.”

Shortstop Jose Reyes’ $106-million, six-year contract was finalized yesterday, a deal that pays him $10 million in each of the next two seasons, $16 million in 2014 and $22 million in each of the final three years. Miami has $22 million option for 2018 with a $4 million buyout.

“It’s a perfect situation in Miami,” Reyes said. “We have a lot of talent there and the new stadium ... close to Dominican, a lot of Spanish people there, so I think I’m going to like it and enjoy it as much as I can.” THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LM OTERO/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

▶ New Marlins shortstop Jose Reyes puts on a team cap yesterday in Dallas.

4 sports

Quoted

“I believe there is only one person to blame for what happened and it’s myself.”
UFC WELTERWEIGHT CHAMPION GEORGES ST-PIERRE, WHO BLAMED A TORN ANTERIOR CRUCIATE LIGAMENT AND A TEAR IN THE INTERNAL MENISCUS OF HIS RIGHT KNEE ON HIMSELF FOR PUSHING TOO HARD IN TRAINING. THE UFC ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY THAT THE MONTREAL NATIVE WILL NEED KNEE RECONSTRUCTION SURGERY AND A LAYOFF OF PROBABLY 10 MONTHS.

“I’ll be back on top, I’ll be back (as) champion.”
ST-PIERRE

Scan code for more sports.

Penguins put Crosby back on the shelf

GM Shero says star centre will miss two games 'as a precaution' after taking hard hit in Monday's loss to Boston

Just the news the Pittsburgh Penguins dreaded — Sidney Crosby is back on the sidelines.

Only this time, the Penguins insist their superstar will miss two games strictly for precautionary reasons and not because of a recurrence of the concussion that forced him to sit out 61 games over two seasons.

Crosby took part in a full practice yesterday, but did not accompany the Penguins on a road trip for games tonight at Philadelphia and Saturday at the New York Islanders. The next time he could play would be Tuesday at home against Detroit.

A hard hit in the Penguins' 3-1 loss Monday to Boston — the team did not specify which one it was — led to the decision to sit Crosby again. Early in the game, Crosby was seen with what appeared to be redness on his face, possibly the result of a hit.

"Sidney took a hard hit during our game against Boston Monday night and wasn't feeling 100 per cent," Penguins general manager Ray Shero said in a statement issued late yesterday afternoon. "He saw Dr. Mickey Collins of UPMC today and took an ImPACT (neurocognitive) test, which showed no problems. However, we all think it's best that he sits out the next two games as a precaution."

The ImPACT test — designed by Pittsburgh-based researchers, including Collins — measures a person's cognitive and memory skills before and after a concussion. The test is widely used by multiple pro sports leagues and teams to determine when a player is ready to return to game action.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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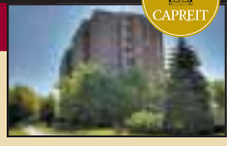

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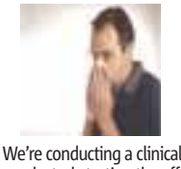

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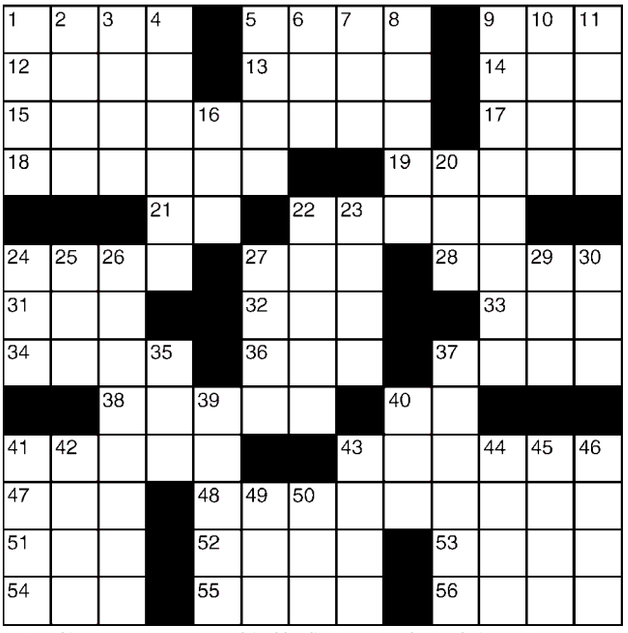

Across
1 Get well
5 Start over
9 Dandy
12 Pelvic bones
13 On
14 "I — Camera"
15 Mask
17 Back talk
18 Advertising section
19 Selassie worshipper
21 B&O, for ex.
22 Dodge
24 — and crafts
27 Hearty brew
28 Sandwich treat
31 Round Table address
32 60 sec.
33 Mischievous tyke
34 First course, often
36 Peculiar
37 Touch
38 Obliterate
40 Yours truly
41 Earring locations
43 Random drawing?
47 Lubricate
48 HBO's vampire series
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52 Greek vowel
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3 Has a bug
4 "Star Wars" weaponry
5 Huck's transport
6 Schedule abbr.
7 Elmer, to Bugs
8 "Tosca," e.g.
9 It barely connects to the sternum
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T	R	E	K	■	D	U	D	■	M	E	G	A
T	A	C	I	T	■	B	E	T	■	R	O	T
■	■	O	D	E	S	■	F	A	A	■	■	■
J	O	U	N	C	E	■	A	C	T	I	V	E
O	K	R	A	■	R	E	C	O	I	L	E	D
W	A	S	P	■	V	A	T	■	L	I	N	G
L	Y	E	S	■	O	R	O	■	T	A	T	E

For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Today's horoscope

♈ Aries March 21-April 20 Do something meaningful today, something that makes a difference in your corner of the world.

♉ Taurus April 21-May 21 You may be eager to push ahead with a new plan or project but wait until Saturday's eclipse has passed.

♊ Gemini May 22-June 21 The straightest route to your destination may not be the best one.

♋ Cancer June 22-July 22 You could come into a sum of money today, and it's just as possible that you could lose it. Either way, don't take material things too seriously.

♌ Leo July 23-Aug.23 What happens today will at first look like a challenge and then like an opportunity. Get competitive.

♍ Virgo Aug. 24- Sept. 22 Stay calm, be patient and don't try to force the pace over the next 24 hours. You may have to wait for those who think slowly to catch up.

♎ Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 If you upset someone in a position of power, make sure you apologize.

♏ Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 There is no point getting worked up if a colleague does a poor job of what he or she is working on.

♐ Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 Bide your time today. Let others make the first move. Nothing is so urgent that it must be done now.

♑ Capricorn Dec. 22-Jan. 20 Try not to get caught up in the hysteria that seems to be making the rounds at the moment. Stay calm.

♒ Aquarius Jan. 21-Feb. 18 A little bit of modesty will go a long way over the next 24 hours.

♓ Pisces Feb. 19-March 20. You may be tempted to cut corners and hope that no one notices. They most likely will, leading to embarrassment. **SALLY BROMPTON**

Sudoku

	9		8		2		6	
		4	5		7	1		
8								4
		7		1		6		
5								8
		8		6		9		
1								5
		6	3		4	2		
	5		2		1		7	

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ▶

1	3	6	5	4	7	8	2	9
9	2	4	3	8	6	5	1	7
8	7	5	9	2	1	6	3	4
6	5	3	2	9	4	7	8	1
2	4	1	7	6	8	3	9	5
7	9	8	1	5	3	2	4	6
5	1	7	8	3	9	4	6	2
4	8	2	6	1	5	9	7	3
3	6	9	4	7	2	1	5	8

Send a KISS

You can now post your kiss, and read even more kisses, at metronews.ca/kiss.

Muffin, I love you with all my heart,even more when we are apart. I want you to know that from the very start of my day until I close my eyes at night you are who I think about! You are my true soul mate, and I think it was fate that we met 10 yrs ago, and it's love,respect,communication and our friendship that has kept us together. I hope we can spend the rest of our lives in each others arms. I Love you Xoxo **PIE**

can't eat, Maybe my life would be complete if you let me spend it with you from making up my mind! Sent you a message. look. Sweetly caring! Secret wish for you to show up at my door. Hold me, please and thank you. Totally understand, if nothing comes of this. I am strong been thru enough to not let negatives get me down. **CAN'T SLEEP**

JOHN RAOUX/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Caption contest

THANASSIS STAVRAKIS/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WIN!

You write it!

Write a funny caption for the image above and send it to play@metronews.ca — the winning caption will be published in tomorrow's Metro.

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AIR MILES® SUPER BONUS EVENT

metro

December 9-15, over
675 BONUS AIR MILES reward miles
available to be earned on select products.†
See store for details.

Rexall TM/MC
Pharma Plus
A pharmacy first.

December 9-11, earn
50 BONUS AIR MILES reward miles
when you spend $50 or more on almost everything in-store.††
See flyer or in-store for details.

RONA

December 10-11, earn
25 BONUS AIR MILES reward miles
on any purchase of $75 or more.‡
See flyer for details.

LCBO

November 27 – December 31, over
1650 BONUS AIR MILES reward miles
available to be earned on select products in-store.‡‡
See store for details.

PLUS

December 9-11, earn
50 BONUS AIR MILES reward miles*
on each purchase of $50 or more at the above participating Sponsors using any American Express®* AIR MILES® Credit Card. Terms and conditions apply.

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AIR MILES® Travel and More

For more information, go to airmiles.ca/superbonus

†On selected products only, from December 9-15, 2011. Available at Metro locations in Ontario, excluding Thunder Bay. Excludes tobacco products, Western Union, lottery, transit tickets, gift card purchases, prescription, prescription services and other professional pharmacy services. Some conditions apply. See in-store for full details. ††Minimum purchase of $50 or more before taxes, after discounts and exclusions. Offer valid from December 9-11, 2011. One offer per applicable transaction only. Some exclusions may apply. See cashier and flyer for details. AIR MILES Base and Bonus offers exclude prescriptions, products containing codeine, postal service, stamps, Gift Card Express, lottery, transit tickets and taxes. Offer valid at Participating Rexall™ and Rexall™ Pharma Plus locations only in the province of Ontario, excluding the region of Thunder Bay and Western Provinces. ‡Excluding taxes and the purchase of gift cards. Offer valid December 10-11, 2011 at participating RONA stores located in Ontario only. Bonus offer must be presented at time of purchase. Limit of one coupon per Collector, per day. Bonus offer applies to the total base reward miles earned on qualifying purchase amount or amount paid as a deposit on special order. Some conditions apply. Details in-store. ‡‡Bonus AIR MILES reward miles available on selected products from November 27 to December 31, 2011 at the LCBO. While quantities last. Offer subject to change without notice. See store for details. *Account must be in good standing. 50 Bonus reward miles offer available at participating Metro locations (excluding Thunder Bay) and participating Rexall PharmaPlus, RONA and LCBO locations in Ontario when you use any American Express®* AIR MILES® Credit Card on each purchase of $50 or more between December 9-11, 2011 only. Other terms and conditions apply. Visit airmiles.ca/superbonus for details. ®*Used by Amex Bank of Canada under license from American Express. ®™Trademarks of AIR MILES International Trading B.V. Used under license by LoyaltyOne, Inc. Sponsor trademarks are owned by the respective Sponsor or authorized for their use in Canada.